

REMARKS

This is a full and timely response to the outstanding non-final Office Action mailed April 26, 2004. Reconsideration and allowance of the application and presently pending claims are respectfully requested.

Application Papers

Applicants respectfully note that the Office Action has not indicated whether or not the drawings have been accepted. It is respectfully requested, therefore, that the status of the drawings be indicated in a subsequent action.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Office Action indicates that claim 31 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Ryan*. As set forth above, Applicants have canceled claim 31 without waiver, disclaimer, or prejudice and, therefore, Applicants respectfully assert that the rejection has been rendered moot.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action indicates that claims 16-20, 23-26, and 29-30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Ryan* in view of *Nicol*. Additionally, the Office Action indicates that claims 21-22 and 27-28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Ryan* in view of *Nicol*, and further in view of *Younglove* and *Gockebay*.

With respect to claims 23-30, Applicants have canceled these claims without waiver, disclaimer, or prejudice and respectfully assert that the rejection as to these claims has been rendered moot.

With respect to the remaining claims, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections are moot as having been applied to a previous form of Applicants' claims. As is indicated above, Applicants have made various amendments to the claims. For example, independent claim 16 now reads as follows (emphasis added):

16. A data storage system comprising:

multiple, separate housings arranged in a vertically stacked relationship, each housing defining an interior and each including:

a first opening providing access to the interior; and

a first data media exchange apparatus configured as a first drawer, the first data media exchange apparatus mounting a plurality of media storage devices each storing a plurality of data media, the first data media exchange apparatus being movable between a closed position, in which the media storage devices are located within the interior of the housing, and an open position, in which at least a portion of the first data media exchange apparatus extends through the first opening and horizontally outward from the housing and in which at least some of the media storage devices are located outside the interior;

a data exchange device for exchanging data stored on the plurality of data media;

a media handling system for transferring the plurality of data media between the plurality of media storage devices and the data exchange device;

a first bulk access apparatus movable between a closed position in which the first bulk access apparatus ***covers the first openings of each of the multiple, separate housings***, and an open position in which the first bulk access apparatus provides access to the first openings; and

a locking mechanism configured to provide a first state in which the first bulk access apparatus is securely attached to the data

storage system and in which access to the first openings is restricted, and a second state in which the first bulk access apparatus is not locked to the data storage system and access to the first openings is provided, *wherein the locking mechanism includes both an electromechanical device and a key lock.*

Applicant notes that independent claim 16, from which all other claims depend, contains various limitations that are not found in the prior art of record. For example, the prior art does not teach “multiple, separate housings arranged in a vertically stacked relationship”, the housings each including a “first opening” and a “first data media exchange apparatus configured as a first drawer”, in combination with a “first bulk access apparatus movable between a closed position in which the first bulk access apparatus covers the first openings of each of the multiple, separate housings, and an open position in which the first bulk access apparatus provides access to the first openings”, as is provided in claim 16. Applicant notes that, although *Ryan* shows in Figure 3 a single housing (see reference numeral 24) enclosed behind an access panel 12, *Ryan* does not show an access panel that encloses the openings of multiple, separate housings that are in a vertically stacked relationship.

As a further point, none of the cited references disclose a locking mechanism for a bulk access apparatus that includes “both an electromechanical device *and* a key lock” (emphasis added).

For at least the above-noted reasons, Applicants submit that the pending claims are allowable over the prior art of record and are in condition for immediate allowance.

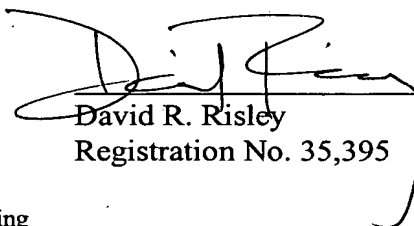
New Claims

As set forth above, upon entry of the amendments in this Response, Applicants have added claims 32-35. In this regard, Applicants respectfully assert that these claims add no new matter and that these claims are in condition for allowance for at least the reason that each of these claims incorporates all the features/limitations of claim 16, the allowability of which was described above.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that Applicants' pending claims are in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application and all pending claims are hereby courteously requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (770) 933-9500.

Respectfully submitted,


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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to: Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450, on

June 10, 2004

Mary Meehan
Signature